

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THIRD MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 23 July 1968, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. R. CARACCILO

(Italy)

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A. da COSTA GUIMARAES

Mr. LUIZ F.P. LAMPREIA

Mr. J. NOGUEIRA FILHO

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV

Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV

Burma:

U CHIT MYAING

U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS

Mr. A.G. CAMPBELL

Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Mr. A. BERNIER

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. T. LAHODA

Mr. R. KLEIN

Mr. J. STRUCKA

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE

India:

Mr. M.A. HUSAIN

Mr. N. KRISHNAN

Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. R. CARACCIOLO

Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI

Mr. R. BERLENGHI

Mexico:

Mr. J. CASTANEDA

Mr. H. CARDENAS RODRIGUEZ

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO

Poland:

Mr. H. JAROSZEK
Mr. A. SKOWRONSKI
Mr. H. STEPOSZ
Mr. S. DABROWA

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO
Mr. O. IONESCO
Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Mr. V. TARZIORU

Sweden:

Mrs. A. MYRDAL
Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. U. ERICSSON
Mr. R. BOMAN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. R.M. TIMERBAEV
Mr. M.P. SHELEPIN
Mr. V.V. SHUSTOV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. M. SHAKER

United Kingdom:

Mr. I.F. PORTER
Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. G. BUNN
Mr. S. GRAYBEAL
Mr. C. GLEYSTEN

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Italy) (translation from French): I declare open the 383rd plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Mrs. MYRDAL (Sweden): All delegations, I am sure, welcome the new vigour that has been discernible since the opening of this renewed session. It is a sign that the commitment made to proceed towards "effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race" (General Assembly resolution 2373 (XXII)) is taken in earnest. It offers good auspices for the departure on our road to really significant disarmament measures. I believe that from now on we can and must move to make matters of disarmament a much more central and dominating issue in the debate on world affairs.

3. We also all share a sense of satisfaction at the fact that the long and arduous work on the non-proliferation treaty (ENDC/226) now lies behind us. However, many national governments, and among them most of those which in this regard may be called the key countries, still have to exert considerable efforts to go through the procedures necessary for their countries' adherence to the treaty. Not least urgent is it that we should soon arrive at as wide an implementation as possible of the non-proliferation treaty, on account of the great importance of its control arrangements. We are striving to establish one set of rules to govern the political behaviour of nations in regard to nuclear weapons -- that is, for non-nuclear-weapon States not to acquire them and for nuclear-weapon States soon to follow suit and refrain at least from augmenting their arsenals. On account of the now rapidly expanding commercial market in products for the development and production of nuclear power for peaceful uses we need also to start to apply, as soon as possible, one set of safeguard rules guaranteeing equitable conditions for the commercial and technological competition in this field.

4. The present session of our Committee will apparently be a short one. Yet we are under considerable pressure to show progress. The Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament has gradually become recognized as an organ of major importance, charged with the main task of negotiation for disarmament, which is certainly one of the most crucial fields of activity of the United Nations. We must again prove

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that the Committee is a going concern. Fortunately, we do not need to devote much time at this session to a general debate; our records and those of the First Committee of the General Assembly abound in well-considered general statements and views.

5. The agenda for the present short session offers itself, it seems to me, in a natural way as a consequence of our preceding work and, more specifically, of the resolutions dealing with disarmament from the two latest sessions of the United Nations General Assembly (ENDC/185, 210). Most of those resolutions were directed to this Committee and formulated in mandatory language. In addition, the representatives of the United States of America and the Soviet Union enumerated in their opening speeches here (ENDC/PV.381) a number of items for the Committee's consideration. The representative of the United Kingdom, Mr. Mulley, in his speech on 16 July, indicated the priorities his Government felt should be accorded to certain of these subjects (ENDC/PV.381, para. 74 et seq). My delegation can subscribe to most of his suggestions. We also share the view of the representative of Canada, Mr. Burns, expressed in his intervention 18 July (ENDC/PV.382, para.17), that a certain focusing of attention is necessary. A narrower agenda than the full list of items before us is indicated for this particular session -- although not so narrow as to be constricted to one subject. As I have just said, such a preferential list more or less shapes itself because of the internal coupling that exists between various disarmament measures, those which have been achieved and those on which preparatory work has been bestowed, thus promising fairly rapid progress.

6. In what follows I shall try to set out what I believe constitutes such a natural agenda and time-table. I will single out its main items by a tour d'horizon of the suggestions most recently made. At some forthcoming meetings I would wish to elaborate on one or two of those items of present priority. If we judge as having top priority that matter which is of utmost urgency for the world as a whole we must, I am sure, so denote the negotiations on an agreement to restrict

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strategic nuclear missile systems, both offensive and defensive, their development, their production and, I take it, also their deployment. Even if the envisaged detailed negotiations between the super-Powers concerned take place outside this Committee, I agree with the representative of Canada that:

"... it is very desirable that the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament should have as much information about them as can be given without prejudicing their progress" (ibid., para. 8).

A successful conclusion of these negotiations -- which we ardently hope will start very soon -- at present appears to be the very key to stopping effectively the nuclear arms race which, as we all know, is once again escalating. It is generally understood and admitted that the tremendous efforts going into this arms race in terms of money, brainpower and other resources do not pay off by any increased security for the participants. On the contrary, the present development in regard to strategic weapon systems can have serious adverse effects on the balance of power. In addition, it certainly increases suspicion, tension and anguish in the world as a whole. The willingness of both super-Powers to broach this subject in serious negotiations is a welcome indication of their own growing concern about this undesirable trend. The whole world must hope for the speedy success of these negotiations. The resources that would be saved for more productive purposes, if an agreement were reached, could be devoted both to urgent human needs within the countries of the major Powers themselves and also for the benefit of the poorer nations.

7. When we look for a top priority item in the nuclear field for the discussions in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament itself, the comprehensive test ban is the most logical choice. This is partly as a definite consequence of the parallel work which I have just mentioned on an agreement on strategic weapon systems, as some requirements for testing could evidently be forgone. Partly this order of preference depends on the special priority given to this item for a number of years by the General Assembly of the United Nations. A comprehensive test ban would constitute an effective measure of disarmament; the ensuing closing

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of present facilities for testing would reduce in a decisive way the material possibilities for further development of new or refined types of nuclear weapons. A test ban would further release a significantly high quantity of valuable resources in men, money and material for peaceful purposes.

8. Another important measure, also mentioned by Mr. Burns in his recent statement, is the cut-off of production of fissionable material for weapon purposes. This item has not been given such a prominent place in the present lists of the super-Powers. But we should recognize that it would be the best method for "stopping the manufacture of nuclear weapons", as required by the Soviet Union as point 2 of its memorandum (ENDC/227). We should also appreciate the fact that the technical groundwork for an agreement with regard to the accompanying controls has already been laid, with the general acceptance in connexion with the non-proliferation treaty of the IAEA safeguards as the means for checking that production of fissionable material is only for peaceful purposes.

9. I wish to turn now to consider, as a third priority for the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, the question of biological and chemical weapons. Our delegation finds itself in great sympathy with the proposal made on 16 July (ENDC/PV.381, para. 87 et seq) by Mr. Mulley to move this item up for urgent consideration. It is a very timely initiative to attempt to widen if possible the prohibition in regard to such weapons to cover not only their use but also their production. I shall postpone to a later occasion our comments on his specific suggestions as to the treatment of this item, hoping that the announced working paper will very soon be available.

10. I wish already to make it clear, however, that we recognize fully the need to respect the Geneva Protocol of 1925. That international instrument is part and parcel of established international law. What is needed now is its strengthening through accession by all States and the abolition of the many reservations made to it.

11. In the tentative list of topics suitable for treatment by this Committee at this session two other items must be mentioned, although placed in a somewhat different category. They should be dealt with partially by the Eighteen-Nation

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Committee, connected as they are with other items on our agenda, but they warrant consideration also in more general connexions by other international bodies. They are both new items, thrust upon us by the rapid technological development. The possible adverse effects in the military field of these new developments could be forestalled through international agreements. I am thinking of the suggested ban on military installations on the sea-bed and an international régime for the conduct of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes.

12. An agreement to prevent any military installations on the sea-bed and the ocean floor would belong, of course, to the same type of conflict-preventing agreements as the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 and the outer space Treaty of 1967, serving also as what we have come to call non-armament measures. Few of the delegations around this table possess much knowledge of the technical-military background, I imagine, so that the Committee will undoubtedly be dependent to a large measure on concrete suggestions from the super-Powers. As to the importance and urgency of an internationally accepted obligation to refrain from using for military purposes the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of the territorial waters of coastal States, there can be no disagreement, I am sure. It is but a corollary of the much-honoured principle of the freedom of the seas and of the conviction held by my Government, together with so many others, that the resources of the non-territorial waters belong to all mankind.

13. The question of the international regulation of peaceful nuclear explosions is a follow-up item of the non-proliferation treaty but it is also, as I tried to show during our deliberations on that treaty, an item intrinsically connected with a comprehensive test ban. We agree with the suggestions already made here by several delegations that the IAEA might have an active role to play in this matter by managing an international régime. It would seem to be appropriate and opportune for this Committee to agree now, as a first step, on the proposal made by the representative of the United Kingdom to ask the IAEA for a report on its possible role in implementing article V of the non-proliferation treaty. This would serve to prevent any premature proposals as to the establishment of a new and separate international body in the field of the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy, which could lead to a waste of scarce technical manpower and organizational talent.

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14. Finally, there are some subjects which must remain on our wider agenda but on which it might be preferable to postpone deliberations until somewhat later. This suggestion should not be interpreted as a negative attitude on the part of my delegation to any specific disarmament measure on which there could be a fair chance of reaching agreement. But we feel no urge at the present time to commit ourselves to work on some of these matters. We suggest that the following three subjects belong to this category:

- (a) the proposed convention on the non-use of nuclear weapons, as it will probably get major treatment at the forthcoming conference of non-nuclear-weapon States in connexion with its agenda item on security guarantees;
- (b) the elimination of foreign military bases. This matter presupposes, as does the previous one, that solutions will be found to some still unsolved political problems.

It seems to us that both (a) and (b) could probably be discussed in a most concrete way, and thus most profitably, in connexion with --

- (c) regional arrangements for balanced disarmament, both nuclear and conventional.

It is a long time since we devoted attention to this problem in our disarmament deliberations. It may find a firmer and more favourable foundation when the non-proliferation treaty is generally accepted. The time for a renewed debate may thus come soon, but does not at this moment seem to be imminent. Notwithstanding these remarks as to postponement of general deliberations, initiatives for action may be taken, of course, in several different regions; Latin America has shown the way and taken a considerable stride forward in regard to the nuclear field.

15. Let me now just sum up our view as to what the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament can most profitably work on during this short session. Our top priority should be reserved for a comprehensive test ban; this is both an obligation, according to United Nations decisions, and a natural concomitant of bilateral super-Power negotiations on limitation of strategic weapon systems. Next, we

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consider it important that the Committee prepare initiatives in the disarmament direction in regard to biological and chemical weapons, although not necessarily treating them identically.

16. Finally, we believe that the Committee must mark positions on certain other items of high topicality, particularly in regard to the sea-bed and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. This short list, of course, in itself constitutes a heavy workload, but the disarmament engine has been gaining momentum and it is our duty not to let it slow down again.

17. Mr. CHRISTOV (Bulgaria) (translation from French): On behalf of the Bulgarian delegation I wish to join in the expressions of welcome and wishes for fruitful work addressed to the new heads of delegations, Mr. Jaroszek of Poland and U Chit Myaing of Burma. I wish to state also our great pleasure at again seeing around this table Mr. Castañeda, the representative of Mexico, and Mr. Azeredo da Silveira, the representative of Brazil. We are happy to know that the Committee, as in the past, will be able to count on the experience of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Protitch, and his Deputy, Mr. Epstein, who are again among us.

18. The Eighteen-Nation Committee resumes its work at a time when a very important milestone in its activity has been passed. The treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, elaborated at the preceding session of the Committee, was adopted by the United Nations by an overwhelming majority. It has already been signed by almost seventy countries. That is a fact which undoubtedly creates a favourable climate for future negotiations on disarmament problems. The satisfaction aroused by this fact can be readily understood since all of us here know how great is the need for a favourable international climate for our negotiations.

19. The representatives of the People's Republic of Bulgaria were among the first to append their signature to the non-proliferation treaty and we firmly hope that the treaty will come into force very shortly thus opening wide the way to the effort called for by resolution 2373 (XXII), adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-second session, namely:

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"... urgently to pursue negotiations on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control;" (ENDC/226)

20. However, although we have confidence in the new possibilities opened up for the work of the Committee, we are bound to note that there still remain several factors which exert a negative influence on the international situation and which are likely to hamper the rapid advance along the path to disarmament which the world has the right to believe in.

21. The war in South-East Asia continues to poison the political atmosphere. The aggression of Israel in the Near East, with all its consequences, and the occupation by Israeli forces of territories belonging to the Arab States have created an extremely tense situation which threatens at any moment to cause dangerous explosions. In a large number of countries vast masses of humanity are at grips with terrible problems and difficulties of every kind at the very time when the arms race, to which, with her usual eloquence, the representative of Sweden, Mrs. Myrdal, has just referred, is reaching unimaginable proportions and swallowing up valuable resources which could contribute to a solution of these problems which, in the final analysis, weigh heavily on the fate of all mankind.

22. At the first meeting of this session we heard messages in which the success obtained through the conclusion of the non-proliferation treaty was referred to in most encouraging terms. The message addressed by the President of the United States to the Committee states that the conclusion of the treaty "... is a triumph of sanity in international affairs..." (ENDC/228, p.1). For his part, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom stresses that the Committee now has "... a tremendous opportunity which must be exploited to the full." (ENDC/229).

23. Such highly authoritative opinions as these enable us to envisage the future of negotiations on disarmament with greater confidence. But we still believe that, in a world where everything is interdependent, the elimination of these negative factors from the international situation to which I have referred -- and, first and

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foremost, the end of the war in Viet-Nam and the solution of the problems arising from the Israeli aggression in the Near East -- will without a doubt ensure even greater possibilities for the success of our negotiations.

24. My delegation considers that the resumption of our work must not be considered merely as a resumption of the discussion from the point where we were obliged to leave it in abeyance because of the need to concentrate all our efforts on the solution of the non-proliferation problem. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that, while taking into account past studies and discussions, the problems of disarmament must now be considered in a new light.

25. In our opinion there are several reasons which justify -- or, rather, make necessary -- a new approach to disarmament problems. In the first place, one of the first lessons to be drawn from the discussions on this subject that have taken place in this Committee, in the United Nations, or elsewhere is that the rapid development of the situation changes the facts of the problems. Time is not on our side. Therefore, each day it becomes more and more necessary for us to seek and find adequate solutions.

26. Secondly, we must take into account the resolutions of the twenty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, which in this connexion constitute pressing appeals and testimony. I shall refrain from quoting passages from resolutions 2289 (XXII), 2342 (XXII), 2343 (XXII), 2344 (XXII) and 2373 (XXII), but I should like to note in passing that the word most often used in these documents is precisely the word "urgent".

27. A third consideration relates to the obligations flowing from the treaty on non-proliferation, and this in a dual sense: in the sense enunciated in article VI under which:

"Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament ..." (ENDC/226), and also in the sense of eliminating some of the reservations in regard to the treaty linked with the achievement of specific measures of progress towards disarmament.

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28. The fourth consideration is connected with the agreement between the Governments of the Soviet Union and the United States to begin, in the very near future, bilateral negotiations on the limitation and reduction of both offensive strategic nuclear weapons delivery systems and systems of defence against ballistic missiles.

29. Another factor favourable to a new approach to disarmament problems is the memorandum addressed to all States on 1 July of this year by the Government of the Soviet Union concerning some urgent measures for stopping the arms race and for disarmament (ENDC/227). In presenting that document at the opening meeting of the present session the representative of the Soviet Union, Mr. Roshchin, emphasized its character as "an extensive programme of measures on which there should be immediate agreement" (ENDC/PV.381, para. 26). Moreover, he stressed that the proposals contained in the memorandum were

"... based on the desires of the peace-loving States which, like the Soviet Union and other socialist States, are in favour of the prohibition and complete destruction of nuclear weapons and the elimination of the threat of a nuclear war." (ibid.)

30. At its meeting of 10 July of this year the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria studied the memorandum of the Soviet Government and took in this regard the following decision:

"The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria approves the memorandum as a positive instrument which is both timely and extremely useful and will give its full support to the urgent measures proposed concerning the cessation of the arms race, and disarmament."

In informing the Committee of the position taken by the Government of Bulgaria my delegation supports the proposals contained in document ENDC/227 and expresses its profound conviction that they can lead to the solution of the crucial contemporary problem: the elimination of the danger of a nuclear war.

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31. We consider, therefore, that in order to achieve this we must place among the first problems to be considered by the Committee that of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, and we support the proposal made to the Committee that it should consider as its priority task the question of a draft convention on this subject, as well as an exchange of opinions on the convening of an international conference to sign such a convention. No doubt we shall have occasion to revert to this question, which we consider to be of burning topicality, deserving absolute priority and very special attention. For the present I shall confine myself to observing that the example and the historic experience of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 for the prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological methods of warfare bring out in a very pertinent manner the significance and the importance of and the role that may be played by such an international instrument.

32. We know that the Geneva Protocol did not achieve a radical solution of the problem and that during the almost half a century of its existence, great progress has unfortunately been made in the production and perfecting of chemical and bacteriological means of destruction. Despite this, however, no one questions the importance of the Geneva Protocol: on the contrary, we are witnessing -- and quite rightly -- a renewed interest in that Protocol. In that connexion, in supporting the proposal of the Soviet Government on the conclusion of a draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, we are convinced that such a convention will constitute, like the Geneva Protocol, an instrument of tremendous political and moral significance and will be an international event of extraordinary importance -- the more so because, according to the solution proposed by the Soviet Union, the problem is not confined to the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, since under the terms of the draft convention the States parties must assume the obligation to make every possible effort in order to reach an agreement on the cessation of production and the liquidation of all existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

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33. The Bulgarian delegation considers that a question that should be among the first to be taken up by the Committee is that of the prohibition of underground tests. This problem is closely linked with the arms race in one of its most dangerous forms, that which leads to the ever-greater perfecting of nuclear weapons. Since there is agreement to devote the greatest attention to the halting of the arms race, it is only logical that we should begin by solving the problem of underground tests, which has been on our agenda for far too long a time.

34. My delegation considers that the Committee must devote its efforts to other problems also, especially the question of the conclusion of a treaty prohibiting the use of the sea-bed for military purposes and the question of the strict observance by all States of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, as well as the problems of denuclearized zones and military bases on foreign territory.

35. After those remarks, and taking into account any other proposals that may be put forward, it appears to be obvious that the Committee is faced with an impressive number of problems, which will not facilitate our task and particularly that of the co-Chairmen. None the less we believe that, as was shown by the experience of the last two sessions, the Committee has great possibilities in terms of time and of the organization of its work. The important thing is to do everything possible to ensure rapid progress in the solution of the grave problems that are before the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

36. Mr. BURNS (Canada): In my intervention at the previous meeting I explained why Canada had up to that date been unable to sign the non-proliferation treaty (ENDC/PV.382, para. 5). I should now like to place on record the following statement, made by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, yesterday, 22 July:

"Last 1 July was an important milestone in the history of arms control and disarmament negotiations. On that day the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was opened for signature and was signed by the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and fifty-three other countries ...

(Mr. Burns, Canada)

"From the outset Canada has played an active part in the non-proliferation negotiations both in the preliminary talks which were held between 1961 and 1965 and in the intensive working discussions in the Geneva Disarmament Committee and the United Nations over the past three years. I am now pleased to announce that the Government has considered and endorsed the treaty and the Canadian Ambassadors in Washington and Moscow and the Canadian High Commissioner in London have today been authorized to sign it on behalf of Canada.

"The treaty is of major international importance. It serves to complement the partial test ban Treaty of 1963 and the Treaty on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space of the same year. It demonstrates how the great, middle and small Powers can work together on arms limitation measures, all contributing to and all benefiting from these joint efforts. And, perhaps most important of all, it opens up new vistas of nuclear arms control. We believe the treaty will help to reduce international tensions and contribute to a more co-operative spirit in international relations. We hope all countries will recognize this and will help to realize the full potential of the treaty by acceding to it."

37. Mr. LAHODA (Czechoslovakia): All the representatives who have preceded me in speaking during the current session have in their statements expressed an appreciation of the merits of the non-proliferation treaty and welcomed the fact that it has so far been signed by more than sixty countries. The Czechoslovak delegation identifies itself fully with that unequivocally positive judgement, especially since the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic had a share in the elaboration of the treaty and was among the first to sign it. The treaty corresponds with world public opinion, which regards it as a victory of common sense and an expression of the responsibility of the respective statesmen to future generations. We have concluded one of the important stages of long negotiations, which, in its consequences, creates favourable conditions for talks on further measures of disarmament.

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38. However, this achievement should not lead to self-satisfaction. We still have to complete the signing and the ratification procedures in the course of which other States should accede to the treaty; without some of them the treaty could hardly have the efficacy expected of it by its present signatories. I have in mind countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany. Their attitude to this question affects their immediate neighbours. From the Czechoslovak point of view this aspect is vitally important in connexion with putting the non-proliferation treaty into force and we have paid great attention to it. We are confident that before long we shall have no such worries and that the treaty will come into force with the participation of the greatest possible number of States.

39. The solution of the question of non-proliferation has opened before us a wide field of operation for elaborating on a number of questions ensuing from the application of the individual provisions of the treaty, including those connected with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the promotion of international co-operation in this field. In accordance with article VI of the treaty, we should permit no delays in taking further steps that would bring us one step nearer to real disarmament. This places before us the urgent task of focusing all efforts on realistic measures that might be implemented within a reasonably short time. At the same time, we should naturally pay regard to proposals aimed at nuclear disarmament.

40. It is in that sense that we understand the purpose of this Committee's present session. We have before us a sufficient number of concrete proposals and preliminary suggestions which should become subjects of our negotiations. A memorandum of 1 July 1968 (ENDC/227) has been submitted to us by the Government of the USSR containing positive proposals for settling a number of outstanding questions in the field of collateral disarmament measures and steps for reducing the risk of war. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic welcomes this initiative by the Soviet Union as a significant contribution in support of peace and international understanding. The proposed measures and the manner of their implementation correspond to our ideas on the progress to be desired in the field

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of disarmament and have our full support. Similarly, we have given careful consideration to the message (ENDC/228) sent to this Committee by President Johnson, read at our opening meeting by the representative of the United States, Mr. Foster, and the suggestions by the representative of the United Kingdom, Mr. Mulley, which we were promised would be formulated in working papers. Today we have listened with the utmost interest to the statements by the representative of Sweden, Mrs. Myrdal, the representative of Bulgaria, Mr. Christov, and the representative of Canada, Mr. Burns -- statements which we shall study most carefully.

41. I believe we have reached a stage when it is unnecessary to ponder over new ideas which would increase the number of proposed items on our agenda; now we should rather come to agreement on the order of priorities, selecting for priority consideration those items offering the best prospects of agreement.

42. When selecting the priorities from among the large number of proposals at our disposal, we should proceed on the basis of certain guidelines which have proved effective in the past and may facilitate our decisions considerably. I have in mind such criteria as those by which a measure is regarded as urgent, as relatively feasible since no inadequate controls are imposed, and as contributing substantially to the cessation or reduction of the armaments race. These should be measures which might effectively reduce the danger of an outbreak of war, particularly nuclear war, and lead to the strengthening of confidence among nations and a relaxation of international tensions. When searching for suitable projects we should pay due attention to the fact that the measures envisaged must not provide advantages to some States at the expense of others or jeopardize the sovereignty and the legitimate interests of individual countries, but must, on the contrary, in the largest possible measure strengthen their own security as well as international security.

43. It is natural that the above-mentioned criteria are far from comprising all aspects that might come into consideration in a comprehensive analysis. Nevertheless, they may be taken into account in our classification of the materials with which

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we are dealing. This would help us in arriving at an agreement on the proposals to which we should devote ourselves as soon as possible. Otherwise, we might lose precious time, of which in any case we have not enough, without touching upon the actual problems involved.

44. Proceeding from that position and paying due regard to the terms of reference given to this Committee by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Czechoslovak delegation believes that the first item to which we should devote our full attention is questions of nuclear disarmament. This group of problems includes the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, the banning of underground tests, measures aimed at the cessation of production of nuclear weapons and the limitation and liquidation of their stockpiles, and the question of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles which is to be the subject of bilateral talks between the USSR and the United States of America. We await the outcome of these talks in the hope that they will substantially facilitate progress in the deliberations on general and complete disarmament in this Committee, which reached an impasse precisely on the solution of this sensitive issue. In this connexion we deem it necessary to put on record the interest of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in bringing about a solution of the varied and complex problems connected with the establishment of nuclear-free zones on the continent of Europe, and particularly in Central Europe. We attach great importance to this question and believe it to be closely connected with the opportunities open in the field of the reduction of conventional armaments on the regional scale.

45. Permit me to make a few additional brief remarks on some of the issues I raised earlier, reserving the right of my delegation to state its position in detail when we examine their merits at a later stage.

46. At the present juncture I must say that the question of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons has come to the fore in connexion with the security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States which, by acceding to the non-proliferation treaty, voluntarily relinquish the possibility of possessing nuclear weapons. It certainly leaves nobody in doubt that a similar obligation expressed in an

(Mr. Lahoda, Czechoslovakia)

international convention would have as much weight and efficacy as, for example, the equally desirable and useful prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological warfare, the extension of which prohibition we are ready to discuss in this Committee or elsewhere.

47. We are not idealists and we do not think that the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons would be a panacea capable of delivering humanity definitively from the threat of a nuclear conflict. However, there is no contradiction between this and the efforts to reduce and limit the danger of such a conflict. After all, all partial measures have a limited nature; yet their importance is no longer denied by anybody. Moreover, this is a case in which the adoption of appropriate measures depends only on the political decision and good will of the governments concerned. Agreement on this significant proposal would constitute further evidence of the sincerity of various declarations renouncing nuclear weapons as instruments of force and pressure.

48. Similarly, the demand for the final cessation of all nuclear tests has become a categorical imperative of the present day, particularly if we bear in mind the cessation of the nuclear arms race. This Committee and other forums of the United Nations have heard a more than sufficient number of convincing statements and arguments offering clear evidence that at their current level science and technology in the world are capable of ensuring a satisfactory measure of control over the test ban through national means of detection.

49. Together with a number of other delegations, the Czechoslovak delegation regards the extension of the prohibition of nuclear weapon tests to underground explosions as an important task of this Committee. The most feasible way of doing this would be by the expansion of the 1963 Moscow Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1) to cover underground tests. In this context we should not lose sight of the idea of a transition period -- the compromise suggestion put forward by the delegation of the United Arab Republic (ENDC/PV.224) that the problem should be solved for the time being by combining the prohibition of underground explosions above a certain seismic magnitude with a moratorium on explosions below that level.

(Mr. Lahoda, Czechoslovakia)

50. Those were the preliminary remarks I considered it necessary to make at this stage of our deliberations. They suggest that the Czechoslovak delegation would prefer to see inscribed on our agenda several items which should be dealt with specifically. This does not mean, however, that we would shut the door on the consideration of any other positive proposals. One such proposal, in our view, might be the demand that the sea-bed be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. We believe that this is a question on which there are hopeful prospects of agreement.

51. In conclusion, I am happy to join the delegations which welcomed to our midst the new representative of Poland, Ambassador Jaroszek, and the new representative of Burma, Ambassador Myaing, and welcomed also the return to leadership of their delegations of Ambassador Azeredo da Silveira and Ambassador Castañeda of Brazil and Mexico respectively.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 383rd plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador R. Caracciolo, representative of Italy.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Sweden, Bulgaria, Canada and Czechoslovakia.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 25 July 1968, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

